

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER 2020

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by [your name, call sign and QTH]

The South African Radio League broadcasts a news bulletin each Sunday in Afrikaans and English at 08:15 and 08:30 Central African Time respectively on HF and various VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. The bulletin is relayed on Echolink by Johan, ZS6JPL. The audio and text bulletins can be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za. To join the bulletin mailing list, send an email to the SARL Secretary.

In the news today:

THE NARC CLOSED OVER THE HOLIDAY PERIOD

FIRST CONTEST FOR NEW RADIO AMATEURS

and

AUSTRALIAN RADIO AMATEURS DENIED ACCESS TO 60 METERS

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.

THE NARC CLOSED OVER THE HOLIDAY PERIOD

The Office at the National Amateur Radio Centre will close on Tuesday afternoon 15 December 2020 for the Christmas holidays and open again on Wednesday 13 January 2021.

KAREL, ZS6WN CO-OPTED AS HF MANAGER

The SARC Council, at its meeting on Tuesday 8 December, decided to co-opt Karel Bezuidenhout, ZS6WN to Council as HF Manager until the 2021 AGM. Karel takes over the portfolio held by the late Geoff, ZS6C.

LAUNCH WINDOW FOR AMSAT'S FOX-1E CUBESAT OPENS ON 19 DECEMBER

The launch that will carry AMSAT's RadFxSat-2/Fox-1E CubeSat into orbit could come as early as this month. Virgin Orbit has announced that the launch window for its LauncherOne Launch Demo 2 mission, which will carry the AMSAT spacecraft into orbit, opens on 19 December. RadFxSat-2 is the fifth and final Fox-1 satellite built by AMSAT. Like RadFxSat/Fox-1B (now AMSAT-OSCAR 91) the RadFxSat-2/Fox-1E CubeSat is a partnership opportunity between Vanderbilt University and AMSAT and will carry a similar radiation effects experiment, studying new FinFET technology.

The RadFxSat-2 spacecraft bus is built on the Fox-1 series, but Fox-1E features a linear transponder upgrade to replace the standard FM transponder in the Fox-1A to Fox-1D projects. Also, the uplink and downlink bands are reversed from the previous Fox satellites in a mode V/u (J) configuration using a 2-metre uplink and 70-centimetre downlink. The telemetry downlink will be 435,750 MHz. The inverting linear transponder uplink will be 145,860 MHz – 145,890 MHz. The inverting linear transponder downlink will be 435,760 MHz – 435,790 MHz. The telemetry downlink features a 1 200 bps BPSK channel to carry the Vanderbilt science data, in addition to a 30 kHz wide transponder for amateur radio use. Telemetry and experiment data can be decoded using *FoxTelem* version 1.09 or later.

[Thanks to AMSAT and the ARRL Letter.]

SANTA CLAUS ON THE AIR

Special event station OH9SCL is once again active from Finnish Lapland ("Santa Claus Land") during the month of December. QSL via LoTW, eQSL or direct to OH9FKJ

FIRST CONTEST FOR NEW RADIO AMATEURS

The SARC Newbie QSO Party is on the air from 08:00 to 20:00 UTC on Saturday 19 December with phone activity on 80, 40, and 20 meters. The exchange and the score are determined by how long you have been a radio amateur. This is an opportunity for the new radio amateurs who wrote the exam on 5 December to take part in their first contest. Turn to page 40 of the 2020 Blue Book for the rules.

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Radio League.

AUSTRALIAN RADIO AMATEURS DENIED ACCESS TO 60 METERS

After considering several options for a 5 MHz amateur allocation, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has come down in favour of national government interests. Following a consultation, ACMA decided not to permit amateur operation on the 5 351.5 – 5 366.5 kHz band. The 15 kHz-wide band was allocated to the amateur service on a secondary basis in 2017. ACMA says, “unresolved sharing issues” have prevented amateur radio use of the band, used by more than 500 other licensed services as well as by the Australian military.”

“The ACMA recognizes the high level of interest shown by the amateur community in adding this band and understands there will be disappointment,” the agency said. Australia’s International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Member Society, the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA), argued for amateur access to 5 351.5 – 5 365 kHz as a compromise. The WIA pointed out that more than 80 countries have been granted access to the band.

[Thanks to Paul Gaskell, G4MWO and the ARRL Letter]

TRANSATLANTIC TESTS MARK 99TH ANNIVERSARY

On 11 December 1921, radio history was made when a signal from amateur station 1BCG in Greenwich, Connecticut was heard in Ardrossan, Scotland, marking the first successful transatlantic radio transmission using shortwave frequencies. Between 1921 and 1924, radio amateurs experimented with transmitting across the Atlantic. Sponsored by the ARRL, the Transatlantic Tests aimed to prove that shorter wavelength frequencies could propagate long distances using transmitters running less than 1 kW. The initial run of the Transatlantic Tests was a failure. For the second Transatlantic Tests, the ARRL dispatched receiver designer Paul Godley, 2ZE considered one of the best operators of the day, to Europe to listen for participating stations. His nine-tube receiver employed the latest superheterodyne technology.

In one of those historical coincidences, during his voyage to England, Godley met Harold Beverage, who convinced him to use a specially designed, highly sensitive, directional 396 m antenna, still referred to as the Beverage antenna. During a pre-event dinner arranged by his British hosts, Godley also met wireless pioneer Guglielmo Marconi.

Over the course of the test period, more than two dozen stations were heard between 230 and 235 meters, roughly 1.3 MHz in what is now the AM broadcast band. Some utilized spark-gap transmitters, others employed vacuum-tube CW

transmitters. The one heard most consistently was the 1BCG CW transmitter operated by six members of the Radio Club of America

CLUB NEWS

The OTL Club held their AGM on 28 November and the following members were elected to serve on the committee.

Chairman: Pieter Jacobs, ZS6XP

Secretary: Yvonne Jansen van Rensburg, ZS6BSH

Technical: Jacques Swanepoel, ZS6WDL

Public relations: Middelburg area – Pieter, ZS6XP and Yvonne, ZS6BSH; Piet Retief area – Jacques, ZS6WDL and Lydenburg area – Conrad Scheepers, ZS6CSV

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to be at low-to-moderate levels. There is a single sunspot region with a simple magnetic configuration visible. There is a slight chance of C-class solar flares. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around seventeen. The 15 to 30 m bands will, especially during the afternoons, provide some good DX fun. For more information, please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za

Finally, a diary of some upcoming events:

Until midnight UTC today - The ARRL 10 m Contest,

13 and 14 December – The Geminids meteor shower,

15 December – The NARC closes for the Festive Season,

16 December – The Day of Reconciliation,

19 December – The SARL Newbie QSO Party,

21 December – The Summer Solstice at 12:02 CAT and the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn,

21 and 22 December – The Ursids meteor shower,

25 December – Christmas Day,

26 December – Family Day, and

31 December – The end of YOTA Month and the 2020 CQ DX Marathon.

To conclude our bulletin, a recap of our leading news story:

The Office at the National Amateur Radio Centre will close on Tuesday afternoon 15 December for the Christmas holidays and open again on Wednesday 13 January 2021.

This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

We invite clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, in both English and Afrikaans, if possible, by following the News Inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items to include in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly radio program, Amateur Radio Today at 10:00 CAT. The program can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band by Louis, ZS5LP. A rebroadcast by Andy, ZS6ADY, can be heard on Monday evenings at 19:30 CAT on 3 620 kHz. We welcome your signal reports, comments, and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Dennis Green, ZS4BS, edited by Herman Erasmus, ZS6CTA and read by

From the news team, best wishes for the week ahead.